United Nations

Daily Highlights

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TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General yesterday expressed deep distress at renewed violence in Kabul since 1 January, which has caused heavy loss of life; appealed to all involved to cease hostilities immediately and resolve problems peacefully.

+ Prime Minister of Bosnia and Foreign Minister of Croatia meet in Vienna for bilateral talks on peace efforts and issues of mutual concern; Co-Chairmen of peace conference, Stoltenberg and Owen, expected to pay informal visit, to hear from both sides.

+ Jacques Diouf (Senegal) takes over as Director-General of United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, succeeding Edouard Saouma (Lebanon) who headed Agency for last 18 years.

+ Azerbaijan calls for international condemnation of what it decribes as recent intensification of aggression against it by Armenia; in letter to Security Council, Chargé d'affaires says missile and artillery bombardment on 29 December left six dead and 18 wounded.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali yesterday expressed deep distress at the renewed outbreak of violence in the Afghan capital of Kabul on 1 January. The fighting has continued since then with heavy loss of life. He urgently appealed to all groups engaged in the violence to cease hostilities immediately and resolve their problems peacefully.

He said the violence further delayed the day when Afghans could embark on the reconstruction of their shattered country, with the help of the international community. The United Nations agencies, he added, were coordinating efforts to respond to this new humanitarian tragedy.

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The Prime Minister of Bosnia, Haris Silajic, and the Foreign Minister of Croatia, Mate Granic, met today in Vienna for bilateral talks on the on-going

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efforts to end the conflict in the former Yugoslavia, and also to address specific mutual concerns.

The Co-Chairmen of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, Thorvald Stoltenberg and Lord David Owen, did not preside over the talks, as they will over the next round of formal negotiations due to begin in Geneva on 18 January. But according to a United Nations spokesman, they were expected to visit Vienna late today to hear from the two sides.

The agenda in Vienna today included the proposal on partitioning Bosnia and Herzegovina along ethnic lines put forward in the most recent round of Geneva talks, and also the demand of the Bosnian Muslims for a land corridor to the Adriatic Sea. They were also expected to discuss the situation in Central Bosnia where Bosnian Government forces have surrounded approximately 65,000 Bosnian Croats.

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Jacques Diouf (Senegal) today became Director-General of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) during a formal handing-over ceremony, the first in FAO's history. He succeeded Edouard Saouma (Lebanon) who had served FAO for more than 30 years, and headed it for the last 18. Mr. Saouma did not seek a fourth six-year term.

In his inaugural speech, Mr. Diouf thanked the retiring Director-General for his long and distinguished service to FAO and the international community. He said that FAO today had the greatest concentration of high-level expertise on food and agricultural issues and that it should build on this wealth of human resources. In the future, the Agency must continue to emphasize increased productivity, but also the preservation of the natural assets future generations would need for their survival.

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Azerbaijan has called on the world community to condemn what it describes as a recent intensification of aggression against it by Armenia. In a letter dated 30 December to the President of the Security Council, issued today, the Chargé d'affaires of Azerbaijan to the United Nations, Yashar T. Aliyev, said that a massive missile and artillery bombardment had been conducted on 29 December against settlements in the Kazakh and Akstafa districts in northwest Azerbaijan, a considerable distance from the disputed Nagorny Karabakh region.

He said that six people had died in the all-day attack and 18 had been wounded. "The bombardment of Azerbaijani civilian facilities and settlements located far from the Nagorny Karabakh region of the Azerbaijani Republic once again confirms the open aggression of the Republic of Armenia against Azerbaijan in an attempt to annex further Azerbaijani territory," he wrote. He called for Armenia to be held accountable for its acts against a sovereign State.

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The Security Council has repeatedly condemned violations of the cease-fire established last year between the Azerbaijani and Armenian forces and expressed its support for the efforts of the Russian Federation and the Minsk Group of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) to bring about a permanent peace between the two sides.
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